

CABLE TROUGH COVER

Field of the Invention

5 The invention pertains to systems for the management and routing of
optical fiber cables and other cables.

Background of the Invention

10 In the telecommunications industry, the use of optical fibers for signal
transmission is accelerating. With the increased utilization of optical fiber systems,
optical fiber cable management requires industry attention. Other telecommunications
cables, including copper-based cables benefit from increased attention on cable
management.

15 One area where cable management is necessary is the routing of cables
from one piece of equipment to another. For example, in a telecommunications facility,
optical fiber cables may be routed between fiber distribution equipment and optical line
terminating equipment. In buildings and other structures which carry such equipment,
the cable routing can take place in concealed ceiling areas or in any other manner to
route cables from one location to another.

20 When routing cables, it is desirable that any routing system will be
readily modifiable and adaptable to changes in equipment needs. Accordingly a routing
system is not practical which would require a high capital outlay and which could not
be readily adapted to changes in a customer's needs. Namely, if routing paths, once
established, are forever fixed, the system cannot adapt. Also, and perhaps most
important, any routing system must protect cables from damage. In the use of optical
fibers, it is recognized that the fibers should not bend beyond a minimum radius of
25 curvature. For example, it is commonly recognized that optical fibers should not be
bent in a radius of less than 1.5 inches.

Current cable management systems typically comprise cable troughs
having a base and sidewalls. It is often advantageous to include a cover over the trough
to prevent dust and other unwanted objects from falling into and damaging the cables in

the trough. There is a need, however, for improved cable trough covers which allow easy access to the cables in the trough yet still protect the cables from damage.

Summary of the Invention

One aspect of the present invention relates to a cover and hinge assembly
5 including a cover plate and a hinge member. The cover plate includes a pivot member along at least one edge. The hinge member defines a pocket for receiving the pivot member of the cover plate so that the pivot member may be rotated within the pocket, allowing the cover plate to be rotated relative to the hinge member. The pocket is sized to allow the hinge member to be snap-fit into and out of the hinge member.

10 A trough cover of the preferred embodiment is versatile so that the same cover may be pivoted in either direction. A connecting piece functions as a hinge or latch as the cover is pivoted.

Another aspect of the present invention relates to a cover for covering a cable trough. The cover includes at least one parallel pivot post along each opposite
15 edge of the cover. The cover defines at least one aperture along each pivot post.

A further aspect of the present invention relates to a hinge piece for hingedly mounting a cover plate with a pivot member to a cable trough. The hinge piece includes two arms coupled by a middle member to form a U-shaped recess. The hinge piece defines a detent pocket for releasably receiving the pivot member.

20 Another aspect of the present invention relates to a cable trough and cover assembly including a cable trough, a cover plate, and a hinge pedestal. The cover plate includes a pivot member along one edge. The hinge pedestal includes a base portion secured to a base of the cable trough and an extending body which defines a pocket for releasably receiving the pivot member of the cover plate and allowing the
25 cover plate to be rotated relative to the trough.

Yet another aspect of the present invention relates to a cable trough assembly including a cable trough, two cover plates, and two hinge pieces. The cover plates include pivot members along at least one edge. The hinge pieces are positioned on sidewalls of the trough. The hinge pieces each define pockets which releasably

receive the pivot members of the cover plates so that the cover plates may be rotated relative to the trough.

A further aspect of the present invention relates to a hinge pedestal for mounting a cover plate with a pivot member to a cable trough. The hinge pedestal includes a base which supports an upstanding wall. The upstanding wall defines at least one pocket sized to receive the pivot member of the cover plate so that the pivot member of the cover plate is releasably received in the pocket and so that the cover plate may be rotated relative to the upstanding wall by rotation of the pivot member within the pocket.

Another aspect of the present invention relates to a method of covering a cable trough having two sidewalls. The method includes the steps of providing a hinge piece with a detent pocket and defining a U-shaped recess, positioning the hinge piece on the sidewall so that the sidewall is received in the U-shaped recess, providing a cover plate having a pivot member along at least one edge, and snapping the pivot member of the cover plate into the detent pocket of the hinge piece.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 shows a perspective view of a first embodiment of a cable trough and cover assembly according to the principles of the present invention with cover plate and hinge pieces.

FIG. 2 is a top view of the cover plate shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is an end view of the cover plate of FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the hinge piece of FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 is an end view of the hinge piece of FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a first side view of the hinge piece of FIG. 4.

FIG. 7 is a second side view of the hinge piece of FIG. 4.

FIG. 8 is a bottom view of the hinge piece of FIG. 4.

FIG. 9 is a top view of the hinge piece of FIG. 4.

FIG. 10 is an end view of a second embodiment of a cable trough and cover assembly according to the present invention with hinge pieces on both sidewalls of the trough, and fasteners.

FIG. 11 is a perspective view of a third embodiment of a cable trough and cover assembly according to the principles of the present invention with two cover plates, hinge pieces, and an insert piece.

FIG. 12 is a perspective view of a fourth embodiment of a cable trough and cover assembly according to the principles of the present invention with two cover plates positioned in a hinged insert piece.

FIG. 13 is an end view of the insert piece of FIG. 12.

FIG. 14 is a side view of the insert piece of FIG. 12.

FIG. 15 is a top view of the insert piece of FIG. 12.

FIG. 16 is an end view of the cable trough assembly of FIG. 11 with fasteners added to secure the hinge pieces to the sidewalls of the cable trough.

Detailed Description

Referring now to FIG. 1, cable trough assembly 100 is shown which includes a cable trough 110 having a base 112 and two sidewalls 114 and 116. The assembly further includes a cover plate 118 and hinge pieces 120. Hinge pieces 120 straddle sidewall 114 and receive cover plate 118 so that a hinged joint is formed between the cover plate 118 and the hinge pieces 120.

The assembly 100 of the present invention allows the cover plate 118 to be snap-fit into the hinge pieces 120 and adjustably positioned in open and closed positions relative to the cable trough 110. For instance, the cover plate may be laid in a closed position over the cable trough to protect cables inside the trough. The cover plate 118 may then be conveniently pivoted by means of the hinge joint into an open position to allow access to the trough interior. Because the cover plates are snap-fit into the hinge pieces, the cover plate may be easily removed from or added to the assembly without the need for time consuming fasteners such as screws.

Referring now to FIGS. 2 and 3, cover plate 118 includes a generally planar member 122 having pivot members 124 disposed along opposite edges of the planar member 122. The pivot members 124 are parallel, rounded posts. The planar member 122 of the cover plate 118 defines a plurality of slots 126 along each pivot member 124. Except for the slots 126, cover plate 118 has a uniform cross section which permits a manufacturer to make the cover plates 118 by extrusion. Slots 126 may be punched out after the cover plates 118 have been extruded.

Referring now to FIGS. 4-9, a hinge piece 120 according to the present invention is shown. Hinge piece 120 includes two opposed arms 132 and 134 joined by a middle portion 136 to form a U-shaped recess 138. The U-shaped recess 138 is sized to receive one of the sidewalls 114 or 116 of cable trough 110. Hinge piece 120 also includes opposed extension members 140 and 142 which define a detent pocket 144. The pocket 144 is shaped as a rounded channel. Bosses 146 protrude from the extension members 140 and 142 toward an interior of the pocket 144. Pocket 144 is sized to receive the pivot members 124 of the cover plate 118. The pivot members 124 can be snap-fit into pocket 144, and bosses 146 act as a detent to retain the pivot member 124 in pocket 144 and to allow the pivot member to be snapped out of the pocket 144. When cover plate 118 is in its closed position as shown in FIG. 1, extension member 140 is received by slot 126 in cover plate 118.

Extension member 142 also includes a push tab 148. By pushing the push tab 148, extension member 142 may be flexed away from extension member 140 which assists in removing the pivot member 124 from pocket 144. In this way the cover plate 118 may be easily snapped out of the hinge piece 120. The cover plate 118, therefore, may be releasably positioned in hinge piece 120. This snap-fit option allows for improved flexibility and efficiency over prior hinge systems requiring screws or fasteners. Tab 148 also functions as a stop to limit the rotation of the cover plate 118.

An inside surface of arm 134 of hinge piece 120 may also include a retaining tab 150 with a ramped surface 151. When the hinge piece 120 is snap-fit to a cable trough such as cable trough 110 shown in FIG. 1, retaining tab 150 opposes an edge 153 of flange 154 on sidewall 114 to hold the hinge piece 120 on the sidewall 114.

In the preferred embodiment, arm 134 of hinge piece 120 may define a fastener window 155 for receiving a fastener. As shown in FIG. 10, fastener 158 may be used to more securely position the hinge piece 120 on the cable trough 110. Fastener 158 includes a tightening knob 160 on a threaded bolt 162 secured to an opposing plate 164. The knob 160 and opposing plate 164 grip flange 154 and hinge piece 120 together. Alternative fasteners could be used such as screws or bolts. The fasteners keep hinge pieces 120 from sliding longitudinally along cable trough 110.

FIG. 10 shows an alternative embodiment cable trough assembly 200 where a hinge piece 120 is placed on both sidewalls 114 and 116. In this arrangement, cover plate 118 may be opened and pivoted in either direction allowing access to the cable trough from either side. An advantage to this design is that the cable technician can access the cable trough interior by pivoting the cover away from the technician, no matter which side of the trough the technician is standing.

FIGS. 11, 12 and 16 show alternative embodiments of the present invention which might be advantageously employed in relatively wide cable troughs such as 12" or 18" wide troughs. FIG. 11 shows a cable trough assembly 300 including a cable trough 310 with a base 311 and sidewalls 312 and 314. Two cover plates 118 and 118'. Each cover plate 118 and 118' is disposed in two hinge pieces 120 which couple the cover plates to the sidewalls of the trough. A hinge pedestal 320 is placed on base 311 of trough 310 between sidewalls 312 and 314 to support free ends of the cover plates 118 and 118'. FIG. 16 shows the assembly 300 of FIG. 11 with fasteners 158 added to help secure the hinge pieces 120 to the cable trough 310.

Referring now to FIGS. 13-15, hinge pedestal 320 includes a base 322 and an upstanding wall or body 324 extending from the base 322. At its top end the upstanding wall 324 defines two detent pockets 326 and 328 for receiving pivot members 124 of cover plates 118 and 118'. The pedestal 320 may be secured to any desired flat surface. Pedestal may include an adhesive 330 on the planar bottom surface 332 of the base 322. The adhesive 330 might be peel and stick adhesive pads, for instance. Alternatively, the base 322 may define fastener holes so that fasteners such as

screws could be received through the fastener holes to secure the pedestal to the cable trough.

As shown in the assembly 400 of FIG. 12, cover plates 118 and 118' may be received by the pockets 326 and 328 of pedestal 320 so that the cover plates 118 and 118' may be pivoted toward the middle of trough 310.

A significant advantage of the cover plates 118, hinge pieces 120 and hinge pedestals 320 of present invention, is that they can be inserted easily into existing cable management systems, effectively retrofitting the existing system. The snap-fit feature of the pivot members and pockets of the cover plates 118 and hinge pieces 120 and hinge pedestals 320 allow covers to be added, opened, closed, and removed without resorting to time intensive fasteners.

With regard to the foregoing description, it is to be understood that changes may be made in detail without departing from the scope of the present invention. It is intended that the specification and depicted aspects of the invention may be considered exemplary, only, with a true scope and spirit of the invention being indicated by the broad meaning of the following claims.